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REMARKS

Examiner White is again thanked for his careful consideration of the present patent application. For the reasons that follow, however, the § 103 rejection is deemed improper, and should be withdrawn.

The Eastman reference, the principal reference cited by the Examiner, is not concerned with a crosslinked starch, and indeed the teachings of the Eastman reference are antithetical to the methods for preparing a crosslinked starch claimed in the present patent application. Eastman is concerned with providing starches that have viscosities within a given range. According to Eastman, after providing or preparing a hydroxyalkyl starch, the starch subsequently is thinned to the desired viscosity level. The thinning is a depolymerization step. Accordingly, Eastman repeatedly teaches to avoid crosslinking the starch. As set forth at column 2, line 16, et seq., for instance, the multi-step process purportedly disclosed by Eastman includes, in step (a), preparing a derivatized starch "under conditions which result in the etherified or esterified starch derivative remaining in non-crosslinked, granular form." Elsewhere, at column 4, line 47, et seq., Eastman indicates that an etherified starch can be prepared via conventional procedures "so long as the resulting derivatized starch product remains in non-gelatinized, non-crosslinked granular form following the derivatization reactions."

At column 7, line 22, et seq., Eastman discusses the depolymerization procedure, and teaches that the depolymerization is necessary to achieve the desired viscosity of the final starch product.

Given Eastman's emphasis on a non-crosslinked starch, and particularly given Eastman's teaching that a depolymerization step should be applied to a starch, Eastman cannot be used to support a rejection of the pending claims, which specify crosslinking. The Tuschhoff reference (and numerous other references in the prior art) disclose crosslinking of starches, but these teachings cannot fairly be combined with those of the Eastman reference, which teach to avoid crosslinking of a derivatized starch and to depolymerize the derivatized starch thus formed. It is further noted that the Tuschhoff reference is specifically directed towards a pasting starch, and

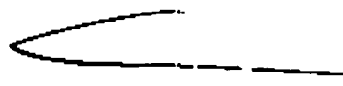
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thus this reference on its own merits neither anticipates nor renders obvious any of the presently pending claims.

In light of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request that the § 103 rejection be withdrawn.

Respectfully submitted,

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